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*Raymundo B. Diamante III
Department Manager III - MISD
Home Guaranty Corporation*



Home Guaranty Corporation (HGC)

INDUSTRY Government

SOLUTIONS **Storage Management, Modular Platform**
Hardware — Hitachi Adaptable Modular Storage 2300
Services — Provided by Hitachi TrueNorth Channel Partner American Technologies, Inc. (ATI)

Hitachi Data Systems Helps Home Guaranty Corporation Support the Philippines' Family Housing Dream

Tasked with being the “invisible hand” in the tangible realization of the national dream of “a happy home for every Filipino family,” Home Guaranty Corporation (HGC) focuses on promoting home ownership to middle and low income families in the Philippines. However, HGC’s efforts were hampered by severe storage challenges, as it operated without a solid and centralized data storage system in place. Hitachi Data Systems provided a strong foundation for new storage operations within HGC with Hitachi Adaptable Modular Storage.

HGC has been aggressively disposing of previously acquired properties and assets in general and residential units in particular. This enables families to acquire houses and lots on soft and easy installment payment terms of up to 15 years, thanks also in large part to HGC’s strong partner relationship with private and government banks, financial houses, investment bankers and portfolio investors. However, these transactions are difficult to support without a workable storage infrastructure. Raymundo Diamante III discovered this when he joined HGC as manager of its MIS department in 2008.

“HGC was actually not using any formal data storage system at all,” Diamante reveals. “What they had was a regular hard drive where data is stored and then later backed up on tapes. That was it.”

Diamante said such a system would be okay if data requirements were not that big and if the company was not planning to expand. But the HGC has, at the very least, 25 years of data regarding properties and other matters in its vaults that need to be transferred to electronic form. “And many of these data are very relevant,” he stresses. “We’ve also got properties that we have allotted to the local governments so that they can properly relocate residents who are living in shanties and squatter areas into their very own properties.”

What makes it even more difficult to centralize these data is the fact that until 2006, the HGC maintained offices in just about every region in the country. “That means all of our data are scattered and we are in fact still moving to have these data centralized,” says Diamante.

“Let me put it this way: If you ask me for data dating back to the 1970s, I would tell you right now to give me a couple of weeks. Even then I might not give you all the data you want,” he explains. “But if the data you ask for is already in electronic form, then I can give it to you in a matter of minutes and you can do whatever you want with that data and it will still be safe because our office still has the original copy.”

Setting up New Data Storage: a Unified Platform

Previously employed with the private sector, Diamante understood that working for a government corporation would be a challenge, but he did not foresee the extra hurdle of the Information Systems Strategic Plan (ISSP) that the Philippine government requires all agencies to prepare. “Originally a five year plan, the ISSP of HGC started in 2006 but a new updated version was created for 2007 to 2011,” he explains.

Diamante added that in order for HGC to comply with a proper working system that the government requires, he and his team had to overhaul the whole system. He wanted everything in one form, on a unified platform.

“Now in order to have a whole proper system, you have to have the hardware to complement it; that’s when I thought of Hitachi Data Systems,” he continues.



“I was already sold on Hitachi as far back as 2000. My work took me to many parts of the world, including the United States, and most of the data that we needed to manage in those places was managed by Hitachi Data Systems.”

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A former IT executive for a Northern European based OEM company, Diamante chose to look at Hitachi Data Systems based on previous experience. "I knew Hitachi was a good working system that was already adopted by many companies in many countries, such as in the United States, in Europe, in Japan and even in Hong Kong — but not in the Philippines. So that's when I decided to contact Hitachi here and requested more information on what it can provide HGC, something that would support the growth of the company," he says.

Judging from Experience

"I was already sold on Hitachi as far back as 2000. My work took me to many parts of the world, including the United States," he recalls, "and most of the data that we needed to manage in those places was managed by Hitachi Data Systems."

As far as he can remember, Diamante's company never encountered any major problems with Hitachi. Not with the system. Not with the hardware and certainly not with the technical support.

"It was that easy," he says. "Well, we did have an instance of having a hardware problem; what impressed me about this was the attention given to the detail of our problem. They actually brought hardware to temporarily replace what needed to be fixed, operations went without a hitch and no money was lost by our company the whole time."

With that experience, Diamante still had to comply with the government's procurement law of open competition but Hitachi Data Systems bested the other companies not just by price but also on the quality.

Terabytes for a New Era

HGC right now is moving towards a new era. As part of its restructuring plan that began in 2001, all regional offices were closed, resulting in the downsizing of employees and a leaner structure. It also paved the way for the creation of a new Investment Department even as Diamante's team continues to consolidate all existing data. For this purpose,

Diamante has already installed 15 terabytes (TB) of storage on Hitachi Adaptable Modular Storage 2300 this year. He expects to order another 15TB by mid-2010.

The Hitachi Adaptable Modular Storage 2000 family provides modular storage solutions with the intelligence to manage many complex tasks that administrators routinely face. With symmetric-active controllers that provide integrated, automated hardware-based front-to-back-end I/O load balancing, these solutions provide 99.999 percent data availability and deliver enterprise-class performance, capacity and functionality at a midrange price.

The fact that the Adaptable Modular Storage systems are also highly flexible with a choice of SAS or SATA II disk drives and support for Fibre Channel SAN, iSCSI and NAS, and enable consolidation onto a single platform augurs well for Diamante's ISSP.

Diamante admits that he is taking a serious look specifically at the Hitachi Adaptable Modular Storage 2300 to build a centralized database and store electronic data files, because of its advanced features. This highly reliable, flexible and scalable storage system is also an optimal choice for tiered or standalone storage, consolidation, business continuity, data replication, backup and archiving.

Transitioning into the Future

"HGC right now is actually trying to transform from a typical Philippine government agency to something modern like what you usually see in many foreign countries," he says. "Right now, whatever I use from Hitachi should complement not just the ISP that I'm using but also the system that I'm going to use."

Diamante and his team are not just planning for today or tomorrow but also for at least next 10 years. He is well aware that he might not always be the IT manager of HGC and therefore understands the importance of making sure the next manager will know what's already in place, and ensuring that whatever further transitions take place in the future will be smooth and without what he calls "hiccups."

"Right now, it's important that the ISSP of HGC succeed, because, if it does, it will be the showcase for every government institution to emulate." And yes, he concludes, it will specifically help HGC in realizing the national dream of providing "a happy home for every Filipino family."

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